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THE TORONTO LANDING

A PAPER

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BY

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THE TORONTO LANDING.*

During the great Industrial Exhibition at Toronto in 1890, many persons made their way to the Exhibition Grounds on the airy decks of the fine spacious ferry-boats *Mayflower* and *Primrose*, and were in this way for the first time conducted to the magnificent wharf or jetty, recently built at the expense of the city at the foot of Dufferin Street, running out some seven hundred feet into the waters of the Bay. In adopting this mode of approach to the Exhibition Park, the citizen or stranger had the advantage of obtaining an interesting view as he passed along of what we may call the historic portion of the city front.

First, he had a glimpse of the old garrison, now disused, from a bastion of which for so many years floated the flag of England, where also for a long series of years the firing of a cannon at noon every day gave the time to the surrounding neighbourhood, and within the precincts of which was situated the magazine, whose explosion in 1813 caused such devastation in the ranks of an invading force.

Then next he saw the group of white stone buildings known as the new barracks, though in fact now some forty years old, in actual use as quarters for a detachment of our incorporated militia, situated on the spot pointed out by the eminent military engineer, Captain Gotha Mann, in 1788, as being best adapted for a fort to protect a town and settlement, when there should be any such object hereabout to protect; a judgment of his, however, which appears not to have been adopted by the authorities at the time. And then, immediately after, he had a striking view of the monument which, since the year 1888, has marked the exact site of the Indian trading post, known as Fort Toronto from 1749 and onwards, the remains of

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which were so noticeable in 1788 that Captain Mann describes them by the term "Ruins," on his map of this region, which ruins he delineates on a small scale a short distance to the west of the spot which he designates as eligible, in his judgment, for a protecting fort. Finally the visitor disembarks at the foot of a noble street, which, though opened up and utilized only of late, has acquired much importance as an approach to the Exhibition Grounds, and is invested also with a peculiar interest as being one of the side lines laid out in the old original survey of Augustus Jones between every fifth two hundred acre lot in the range extending from the York and Scarboro' town line to the Humber.

It is in regard to the romance, so to speak, connected with the new landing-place at the foot of the street just referred to, that I desire to put on record one or two observations.

This landing-place represents, more nearly than any other along our city front, the original landing-place at the foot of the cliff, immediately under the palisades of the old French trading-post, where, from time to time, small fleets of bark canoes and other frail craft were to be seen putting in from the east, west and south for purposes of traffic, more than a hundred years ago.

It so happens that the surveyor, Augustus Jones, makes a note in his field-book that he ran this particular line between lots 30-31, two chains to the west of the old French fort, so that the new landing-place is situated just that small distance from the landing on the beach below the trading-post.

This fact will certainly become a matter of increased interest in the future, when the landing-place at the foot of Dufferin Street shall have become a customary stopping-place, as it is expected one day to be, for steamers from Niagara and Hamilton, not only at exhibition time, but at other periods also throughout the year. The jetty or wharf at the foot of Dufferin Street has the fine peculiarity also of being in a direct line with that street; while in the case of every other street traversing Toronto from north to south to the water's edge, the street ends in a "slip," or narrow compartment of water with wharfage accommodation on the right and left, while in this case the street

is, as we have seen, continued out uninterruptedly on a broad, roomy jetty, some seven hundred feet in length.

The landing-place at the old French trading-post was aforetime *par excellence* "the Toronto landing," and the space in its immediate neighbourhood seems to have been spoken of in a general way as Toronto, when as yet no town-plot of that or any other name had been then laid out. Should, for example, the *Official Gazette* at Niagara-across-the-lake announce in its columns that His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor had just embarked in His Majesty's schooner, the *Missisaga* for Toronto, it was to this particular spot that reference was made, and here probably he and his suite would be put ashore from the Government vessel in some canoe or light boat, sent out from the strand below the fort. It is also likely that His Excellency's famous canvas house (noted by Bouchette, p. 89, vol. 1., of his "British Dominions") was in the first instance set up somewhere near the edge of the cliff at this spot. Around the trading-post at Toronto, we know, from the journal of Major Robert Rodgers, 1760, p. 206, there was a large cleared space which would be convenient for such a purpose; and from this point the enterprising Governor would conduct his explorations eastward to the site of the proposed town, afterwards surveyed and laid out under his inspection by Augustus Jones. At a subsequent period the migratory house may have been removed to where the garrison was afterwards established at the junction of the Garrison Creek with the Bay.

It will be of use to allude to an expression in connection with the landing here. Charlevoix designates it on his map by the term Teiaiagon. (See Charlevoix's "Histoire de la Nouvelle France." Quarto. Paris, 1744, page 276. The map is by Bellin.) In regard to this Teiaiagon some ambiguity has arisen, another Teiaiagon having been said to exist some way eastward on the shore of the lake, nearly where the town of Port Hope now stands. This is asserted in D. W. Smith's "First Gazetteer of Upper Canada," page 143, who uses, indeed, an orthography slightly different, but the same term is evidently intended.

The explanation seems to be this: that every important landing along the coast of the lake would be named by the Mississagas or Otchipway, Teiaiagon, the meaning

of the term being, as I am assured by well-informed authority (the late Mr. Allen Macdonell, of Toronto), a landing where a trail or portage commences, leading to some other important water route.

The Teiaiagon at Port Hope would be the terminus on Lake Ontario of the portage to the chain of back lakes leading to Lake Huron, and the Teiaiagon at Toronto was the southern terminus of the portage *via* the valleys of the Humber and Holland Rivers to Lake Simcoe, and beyond, also, to the waters of Lake Huron.

As I have often before pointed out (it will be no harm to repeat the circumstance), in Charlevoix's map at the period when the landing here is designated Teiaiagon, the lake to the north which *we* call Lake Simcoe is designated Lake Toronto.

The word Toronto, as is known from the testimony of a long tradition, signifies a place of meeting, or populous region, the reference being to the territory between this lake and Lake Huron, thickly peopled with the Huron or Wyandot tribes.

In the dictionary of Gabriel Sagard, a Recollet missionary who laboured at an early period among the Hurons, the word Toronton occurs, as also Otoronton. As applied to an inanimate thing, both words denote a great quantity of it; as applied to men, they each denoted a great number of them.

The syllables Toronton, often heard in connection with the idea of large numbers, would be readily transformed by the French into a local name for the populous region inhabited by the Hurons or Wyandots, and be applied also as such to the small lake situated in the midst of that region.

After the Huron tribes had been extirpated by the invading Iroquois about 1649, the term continued for a time in use, although no longer applicable, and at length altogether disappeared from the maps of the region, but, strangely and happily, it survived as a designation for the landing-place on Lake Ontario, where traders and others had been wont to disembark for the purpose of making the portage to the populous region to the north. The letter at the end, giving to the last syllable a French nasal sound, has been dropped; as in Oswego, for Ochoueguen.

The term Teiaiagon was no longer heard, being displaced by the new appellation Toronto, now so familiar to us all.

Our technical use of the word "landing-place" has been derived from the old voyageur days of Canada, and it corresponds exactly in its significance with the Indian term Teiaiagon, signifying a place where you disembark to perform a necessary portage of greater or less length. "Dickenson's Landing" used to be a familiar expression amongst us, as perhaps we shall remember. It was where the traveller left the bateaux in order to go round by land past the Long Sault. The Queenston landing, frequently styled, as we shall remember, by way of eminence, "*The* Landing," was where you disembarked to make the portage round the Falls of Niagara. Prince Arthur's Landing, at the head of Lake Superior, originated, I believe, in the fact that it was where the Prince disembarked for the land journey to western waters.

Curiously, the expression "Holland Landing," continues to this day to be familiar to travellers on Yonge Street, and the passengers by the cars of the Northern Railway. It is an interesting reminder of the time when "Toronto Landing" had its full force of meaning as denoting the southern ending of the portage, of which Holland Landing was the northern beginning; for it was just here where voyageurs from the waters of Lake Huron and Lake Simcoe, after passing a few miles up the Holland River, disembarked to make the portage southward by the valley of the Humber to the Toronto Landing.

To render the discussion a little less incomplete, two or three observations are subjoined, which may be regarded as "foot notes," intended to throw light on points here and there touched on in the text.

Note 1. After the disappearance from the maps of the expression Lake Toronto, as a designation for the lake which we know now as Lake Simcoe, several other names for that sheet of water appear in French and English documents. The most important of these would seem to be the French expression, Lac-aux-Claies, that is, Hurdle

Lake, apparently with allusion to some arrangement for spearing fish at the narrows of the lake. This name is given in D. W. Smith's "First Gazetteer." English traders and land surveyors corrupted the French expression, Lac-aux-Claies, into Lac-le-Clie, or Lac-la-Clie, a word having no meaning. In Captain Gotha Mann's map the old trail of the portage starting fror Lake Ontario is designated as "Part of the road towards Lake la Clie."

The primitive land surveyor, Augustus Jones, also makes a note in his field-book, when in the course of his operations in these parts he comes out upon the trail leading to Lake la Clie. D. W. Smith likewise notices the variation. It is of interest to subjoin that the route in the present High Park, Toronto, marked "Indian Road," is a portion of the track referred to.

Other names apparently of Indian origin were likewise applied to Lake Simcoe, such as Sinion or Sheniong, said by some to mean Silver Lake. D. W. Smith has also noted these names. Another native term, uncouth enough for this lake supplied by the same authority, was Ouentironk, Latinized by Creuxius in the map given by Bressani, into *Lacus Ouentaronius*, an effort, probably, to express the Otoronton of Sagard, *Beaucoup de gens*, etc.

Note 2. I have elsewhere recorded the fact that many years ago I had access to a manuscript map of Western Canada at Wolford in Devon, bearing date about 1792, in which Toronto was marked, described as follows: "Toronto, an Indian village, now deserted." I have no doubt that the "Indian village, now deserted," really meant the remains of the Indian trading-post known as Fort Toronto. In Gotha Mann's time these remains were sufficiently extensive to induce him to describe them as "Ruins" on his map, and he was able to delineate distinctly on a small scale five buildings within the enclosure of the palisade.

These remains may have afforded a partial shelter from time to time for wandering bands of Indians, and here probably were accommodated the two Missisaga families, of whom Commodore Bouchette speaks, page 89, vol. I., of his "British Dominions in North America," as constituting the sole inhabitants of Toronto when, at the command of the Government, he commenced the survey of the harbour.

The remains of the old French Fort at Toronto were numerous and sufficiently conspicuous down to the year 1879, when a cairn was erected at the expense of the corporation, bearing a suitable inscription to mark the spot.

The necessities of the Public Industrial Exhibition, instituted about that period, required that the ground hereabout should be levelled down and sodded, causing the entire obliteration of the surface marks, which had to that date been so visible, of the foundations of the wooden buildings of the fort and of the palisade which surrounded it.

The remains of the cairn, with its inscription, are now to be seen on the east side of the base of the monument, which has since been erected to mark the same spot.